

Actions carried out during the health crisis in higher education cycles. Challenges shaping leadership



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Gabriela Fernández Saavedra

Pharmacology

Ana María Vázquez Álvarez

Physiology

Rodrigo Miranda Zamora

Biochemistry

Beatriz Georgina Montemayor Flores

Anatomy, National Autonomous University of Mexico

ABSTRACT

At the end of the 20th century, reflection was made on the emerging challenges of the third millennium based on social, economic and political conditions. In the educational field, UNESCO published recommendations aimed at the operation of the global world; However, the arrival of Covid19 postponed the plans, testing all societies and their ability to respond to the health crisis. In this article we share some of the actions carried out in the Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Pharmacology of the National Autonomous

University of Mexico, these were activities carried out during the crisis, which were aimed at the prevention of infections, the continuity of activities essential, the reinforcement of communication channels and support for students, teachers and administrators. Methodology: the actions carried out between March 2020 and May 2023 were compiled, identifying the measures, actions and activities within the Faculty of Medicine and the activities of the Pharmacology department. The efforts were not limited to the community, there was also external support and collaboration. Conclusions: with the health crisis, institutional weaknesses and strengths were detected, the decisions made by the Management of the Faculty of Medicine and the Head of the Department of Pharmacology were aimed at reducing the impact of the pandemic, simultaneously support was provided to the students, academic and administrative to meet the established goals, this favored resilient, supportive and creative behaviors. Knowledge was reaffirmed in decision-making positions, demonstrating that challenges such as the health crisis shape leadership.

Keywords: Educational leadership, Pandemic, Resilience.

1 INTRODUCTION

Since the last century and taking into account technological, political and economic advances, experts met and subsequently published recommendations for the educational system and the changes that would be necessary to favor the globalized world; An aspect of great interest was the incorporation and use of technology in the educational area (Feijoó, S. R., 1998), so activities were planned around education assisted by emerging technologies. The arrival of Covid19 forced the postponement of plans, and face-to-face educational activities turned to technological means to continue their activities remotely, demonstrating their usefulness in times of great uncertainty, and proving that virtuality saved reality (Saavedra, G. F., 2021).



The first impact of COVID was on the economic sector and derived from this, its effect on all social organizations, including the education sector. Several Mexican educational entities have made evaluations of the effects of the pandemic in the educational area of higher cycles, concluding that a good part of this educational crisis is linked to the needs of students, the methodologies used during the process, the curricular plans, the incorporation and optimized use of technology, the pandemic changed the panorama and now it is proposed *to educate for uncertainty* (ECLAC, U.N., 2020; Román, J., 2020).

Focusing on individuals, the experiences from isolation to the return to face-to-face activities have left affections and sensations, which some researchers have collected and organized, to explore the benefits and challenges implied by forced virtualization, in a process of continuous adaptation, detecting varied affects during isolation and then when returning to face-to-face classes. students in higher education cycles had to reflect on specific aspects from the available resources and the real possibilities to achieve it, (Contreras-Vizcaino, J. J., & Zamora-Echegollen, M. A., 2023).

In addition to specific aspects such as educational financing, there are population-based studies that explored the importance of students' resilience and its relationship with eating habits, sleep quality and physical activities, all of which have an impact on their learning process, showing the importance of these and emphasizing the importance of individual resilience, which in turn defines quality of life and mental health of each individual, (Reyes, K. M. G., 2023).

This leads us to a complex scenario, where students, academics and administrators experienced the health crisis in a heterogeneous way; In such circumstances, changes of all kinds were made to continue essential activities. It is in these circumstances that it is possible to identify the actions carried out by the heads and directors of an institution and analyze what worked and what needs to be modified, which sectors require more support and which are adapted to scenarios of both normality and uncertainty.

In this article we compile the actions carried out in the Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Pharmacology of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, knowing that initially they were emergency measures, these gave rise to many learnings, of course there are pending challenges such as reducing desertion, professionalizing the staff and many other observations made in the period from isolation to the gradual return to activities Face.

2 METHODOLOGY

The actions described in the 2020 Yearbook were resumed and other actions carried out in the period from March 2020 to May 2023 in the Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Pharmacology were added.



3 RESULTS

Table 1. Actions carried out during the pandemic and post-pandemic, summarises some of the actions and activities that emerged during the health crisis from the beginning of social isolation in March 2020 until 2023.

No.	Action	Guy		
		General	Faculty of Medicine	Department of Pharmacology
1	Isolation of members of the university community	X		
2	Dissemination of basic measures to prevent contagion	X		
3	Migration from face-to-face to virtual activities	X		
4	On-call groups to attend to specific teaching, administrative and school activities.		X	
5	Opening of various means of contact and communication between students and teachers.		X	
6	Technical support and guidance in the proper use of devices, networks, and applications available to continue with essential activities		X	
7	Formation of the University Commission for the Attention of the Coronavirus Emergency		X	
8	Development of Covid diagnostic and detection tools, biosensors and platforms for the production of vaccines.		X	
9	Molecular diagnostic service for the SARS-CoV-2 virus for the university community		X	
10	Meditic meditic.facmed.unam.mx Page		X	
11	"Donate a kit. Protect a resident."		X	
12	COVID-19 Call & Chat Center		X	
13	Theoretical-practical course-workshop "Proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)"		X	
14	Theoretical-practical course-workshop on "Endotracheal intubation in patients with COVID-19"		X	
15	COVID-19 training, supervision, advisory and communication program.		X	
16	Survey "Health monitoring for SARS-CoV-2 in Households"		X	
17	COVID-19 Diagnostic Center for the General Public		X	
18	Mental Health Program Clinic and Sleep Disorders Clinic Online Care		X	
19	"Together for Health" Initiative		X	
20	Iniciativa Costal, the Faculty of Medicine and Pienza Sostenible, with the support of Rappi, delivered sacks of food aid.		X	
21	Telegram for the community		X	
22	COVID-19 Temporary Unit at Citibanamex Center		X	
23	Mexico Pharmacology Foundation			X
24	Book: A Practical Guide to the Use of Drugs During Teratogenesis			X
25	Diploma in Cannabinoid Pharmacology			X
26	Journal of Pharmacology			X
27	First Congress of Pharmacology			X

Table 1. Actions carried out during the pandemic and post-pandemic

4 DISCUSSION

The National Autonomous University of Mexico, as well as other educational instances, adopted the general indications in terms of drastically reducing face-to-face activities and promoting



the virtual modality, this would correspond to paragraphs 1 to 3. Paragraph 4 addresses the need to structure guards throughout the university to give access to users and continue with activities that cannot be postponed, such as experimentation, maintenance of animal farms and administrative activities related to staff and the student community.

From sections 5 to 22 there are activities such as the optimization of communication channels, support for the use of technological devices, available tools and breviances for their educational management, workshops for diverse learning, actions to protect residents both with donations of disposable equipment and basic instructions on its use, highlight the opening of Mental Health and Sleep Disorders Programs to serve all members of the university community in a online modality. In addition, spaces and projects were opened to contribute in aspects such as the delivery of sacks with food, courses and diagnosis of Covid 19 aimed at the general population, paragraphs 20, 22 and 17 respectively.

The Student Congress of Pharmacology stands out, which includes the students of the bachelor's degrees of the Faculty of Medicine, in addition to being open to the humanities, promoting the socialization of all attendees, the congress was free, and undergraduate and graduate students were summoned to participate with a research, which could be clinical, bibliographic or preclinical. This congress brought together students from various educational instances as it simultaneously hosted the XXVIII Student Congress of Pharmacology organized by the National Polytechnic Institute, that is, two public educational instances of Higher Education cycles joined forces in a moment of recovery, this was when the return to face-to-face activities was already underway, in April 2023.

The activities of section 23 onwards were specific to the Department of Pharmacology, led by Dr. Omar Carrasco, who promoted activities in which all staff participated, unifying tasks and favoring the post-pandemic resilient process.

What we can see is that crises promote the transformation and renewal of social structures, although they leave many difficult experiences that mark individuals, the process of resilience allows them to recover and look for alternatives to move forward, (Reyes, K. M. G., 2023). In this scenario, we can see that being an educational leader is a challenge (Serrano, G., 2020). It is not only about finishing all the programs, but also about selecting the essentials, not only about using technology to move from face-to-face to virtual, it is about self-evaluation and verifying that teacher professionalization and knowledge of technologies are required, it is a very large and coordinated effort in which tolerance, Patience and resilience must be present in order to achieve goals in times of uncertainty.

According to Serrano (2020), educational leadership must be carried out through very specific actions, among which he points out "*prioritizing what should be taught, analyzing teaching methods, and proposing ideal spaces for learning*". This is an intense and constant task because it forces us to



evaluate ourselves. One way to improve teaching is to listen to students, as there are many concerns about it, a frequent problem in undergraduate students is the overload of tasks both in the face-to-face sessions and in the virtual classrooms, apparently once the return to the face-to-face modality has not been reviewed the content and workload of the activities in virtual classrooms, It is true that it is important to continue learning technologies, but the times must also be adjusted, if students have 8 hours a week of a subject, they should not exceed 25% of that time in additional tasks, because it should be thought that by taking more than four subjects per year, it leaves them a very limited margin of time to do the activities, For this reason, it is prudent to make a refinement and focus on the essentials, additionally it is necessary to reflect on the competencies and skills that students are learning and their correlation with the competencies that will be necessary tomorrow during their professional practice, therefore any activity that represents an overload without having the justification that they are necessary competencies for future professional practice must be eliminated.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The pandemic left many learnings inside and outside the educational field, technology became a formidable tool in an uncertain scenario; There are still many actions pending regarding teaching in higher education cycles, which must be attended to in order to be prepared for any eventuality. New educational challenges are emerging, such as the incorporation of artificial intelligence, so it will be necessary to design strategies that allow us to rely on technology, professionalize teaching and promote the development of critical thinking, daily reflection and the socialization of knowledge. Finally, it is proven that the crisis shapes the leadership of individuals.



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